



RECORDS MANAGEMENT ADVICE

Basics of Records Management:

Records Officers and Cardholders

Purpose: Provide guidance to state government agencies regarding the importance of appointing the appropriate staff member as their agency Records Officer.

What is an agency Records Officer?

A Records Officer coordinates the department's records management program and ensures records management activities are performed in accordance with standards and procedures. All department records, regardless of media, must be maintained, scheduled, transferred and disposed of according to policies established by the Maine State Archives (MSA).

Who should be a Records Officer?

The Records Officer exercises authority on the Commissioner's behalf. If the Records Officer cannot be a direct report to the Commissioner or head of the department/bureau (*this is the ideal situation*), there should be no more than one reporting step between them. (*Examples of appropriately chosen RO positions are: Administrative Secretary to the Commissioner; or Assistant to a Director. Examples of inappropriately chosen RO positions are: Office Associate / Assistant in the department's administrative services section.*)

What are the expectations of a Records Officer?

To assist state agencies in developing and providing oversight of the records management program in their agency, including training others in their agency to follow established records management guidelines, policies and retention schedules. Records Officers are responsible for the creation, storage, retrieval and disposal of all recorded information about their organization's activities. Information can come in many formats such as digital, photographic, film or paper.

In addition to expectations listed above, Records Officers are responsible for designating cardholders (*staff who are allowed to request records for an agency*) and notifying the MSA of all changes in access authorizations. When a cardholder leaves the agency, the Records Officer must tell the MSA so the card can be canceled. The MSA also needs to know if a cardholder whose duties have changed should no longer be allowed to order records, or should have different access restrictions.

Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available at
<http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/records/state/statetraining.html>